

REMARKS

The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The Examiner has indicated claims 1-3 would be allowable if claim 1 is amended to overcome the above objections. The Examiner's indication of allowability is noted and appreciated. As claim 1 was amended in the Amendment filed on January 20, 2004 to overcome an objection made by the Examiner in the Office Action dated October 8, 2003, the Examiner's characterization of the status of claims 1-3 is incorrect, as there is no outstanding objection to any of claims 1-3 in the Final Rejection. The undersigned confirmed that claims 1-3 are in fact allowed during a telephone conversation with the Examiner on July 20, 2004. Therefore, claims 1-3 are in allowable form as-is.

Claims 15 and 16 are objected to due to an improper claim dependency noted by the Examiner. However, as claims 15 and 16 have been canceled, this objection is rendered moot.

Claims 4-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Saita et al. (U.S. 6,293,581). However, as these claims have been canceled, this rejection is rendered moot.

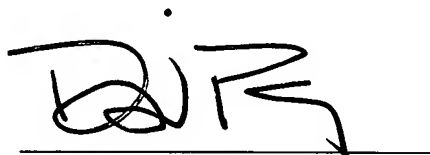
Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being unpatentable over Saita et al in view of Wallner et al (U.S. 6,308,982). However, as this claim has been canceled, this rejection is rendered moot.

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In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Please charge any unforeseen fees that may be due to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DGP', written over a horizontal line.

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